



ON THE COMMON

2025

December

From the Pastor's Desk...

BY PASTOR SEAN

In 1636, about two hundred years before this congregation was founded, one of our local Protestant predecessors crossed the Seekonk River and continued moving south with his party. He'd once been a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony – a body with a strict, unwavering form of government drawn from their staunch Puritan beliefs. But this man was a bit different than his peers: he believed in a tradition called “soul freedom” – that is, the ideal that religious beliefs shouldn't be dictated or enforced by any government. That religion and government were two parts of the human experience that had no right butting up against one another.

After being convicted of sedition and heresy by Massachusetts Bay authorities a year earlier, the man and his party traveled further southward, finally resting at a safe cove in Narragansett territory. And unlike many of his peers, this man negotiated for the sale of the land with the local indigenous people: he preferred peace to war, diplomacy to hostility. And luckily, they'd traveled just far south enough to be outside the grasp of the Massachusetts Bay Colony – outside the threats of violence, the demands for spiritual and religious conformity, the “soul bondage” that Williams had found himself banished for criticizing. The man and his party, they were convinced that it was the hand of God that had led them out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to this specific place.

That city's name would be Providence; its founder, Roger Williams. Williams based his colony as a home for religious non-conformists: those for whom the intermingling of religion and government had become anathema – those who had to flee, in order to practice their deeply-held beliefs. So Roger Williams gathered these people and formed the first government in modern history where the state and faith did not intermingle – a place where Williams' idea of “soul freedom” would take root, and evolve over the years into what we call the “separation of church and state.” Williams' survival attempt turned into a civic

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OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Rick Stelle, Moderator
Ruth Mills, Clerk
Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

CHURCH STAFF

Sean Amato, Minister
Donna Myers, Administrator
Joseph Godfrey, Music Director
Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
Patricia Renaud, Organist
Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
Romeo Mendes, Sexton

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Ruth Mills, Caring
Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
Jim Robshaw, Hospitality
Bob Meo, Stewardship
Martha Hunt, Music
Rick Stelle, Property
Terri DeBoise, Missions
Mary Stelle, Christian Ed
Bob Meo, Fundraising, Projects

DIACONATE

Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
Christine Bonas
Marilyn Briggs
Marsha Brodeur
Richard Brodeur
Ann Colton
Sandy Gamache
Martha Hunt
Darlene Magaw
April McAllister
Jim Robshaw
Stephen Wowk

From the Pastor's Desk ... (Cont.)

experiment, here in Rhode Island – an experiment that would inform our Bill of Rights, would become the basis for the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for redress.” Even the wording of that Amendment was drawn from Williams’ colonial charter at Providence.

Williams’ experiment, based in our state’s capital city, would take on the trappings of a state – the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. And to this day, what is our state’s motto? One word: simply, “Hope.” And that one-word motto is drawn, if you can imagine it, from scripture – and that made sense, considering that Roger Williams was a minister! It’s drawn from a passage from Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews - Hebrews 6:13-19, precisely. I’ve added it here below.

“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

For those of you feeling forlorn upon this Advent doorstep; for those of you feeling as if there isn’t enough hope to help you make it through this season: hear these words. See what

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Handbell Choir News

On the Common Ringers look forward to sharing our music with their congregation! We will be playing a few times throughout the Christmas season. On December 14 we will present “Mary, Joseph, and the Baby,” a short Christmas play with our kids, accompanied by handbells!

The Community Handbell Choir, “Little Rhody Ringers, continues to rehearse in our sanctuary. We will perform at two events, the first at the Milford High School Winter concert on December 17, and the second at a private holiday party in Jamestown.

The New England Ringers’ Sanctuary Sounds performance was amazing this past Saturday! Thank you to everyone who helped to make this concert possible, and all of those who came out to see the show! We look forward to many more Sanctuary Sounds performances in 2026!

If your New Year’s resolution is to try handbells, come talk to me or anyone in the bell choir! All are welcome, no experience necessary. We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:30, right before Senior Choir rehearsal! Why not try both?

Wishing you and yours a joyful, cozy, and musical holiday season!

Jill Boday

From the Pastor’s Desk ... (Cont.)

blossomed from brave hope, hope in the face of oppression! Our state would not exist without it. Like Williams, let us recognize God’s love, God’s promise – and let us cling to this, through what might be a difficult season. Remember the words: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

When all is lost, and we find ourselves waiting in the dark for Christ – forgetting that He promised to come like a thief in the night, when we’d least expect it; when we’re left without a guarantee as to when things will improve; without a timeframe for when our Christ will return. In these dark and chilly days, rest in God’s promise of restoration – of good and greater things – as we await the coming of our Christ. Welcome to the Advent journey, my friends!

Pastor Sean Amato



Christian Education Update

BY MARY STELLE

We are enjoying our 2025 Advent Season. Jill Boday has been teaching our students to play the chimes for our Christmas pageant. Starting on November 23, we began rehearsing for this performance. There are limited speaking roles with lots of chimes, sheep, donkeys as well as input from the adult bell ringers.

To begin Advent, on Sunday, November 30th, the students enjoyed cocoa with the Wise Men while they drew pictures for or wrote letters to Jesus. The Wise Men will bring these to the baby Jesus. We also hung the greens (to decorate the church). The students began to add characters to the crèche.

December 7th, there will be a short rehearsal in the sanctuary after service for the Children's Pageant. Parents, please plan on letting your children attend this practice as they prepare their performance for the following week.

On December 14 we will have the mitten tree and our Children's pageant! We are asking families to bring mittens, hats, gloves and scarves for adults and children in need. The items put on the tree will be distributed to local groups.

There will not be Sunday School on December 21 so all will be able to enjoy the adult Cantata. Christmas Eve Services will be at 5 and 11 pm.

On Sunday, December 28, we will continue our tradition of our PJ service. There won't be child care or Sunday school. Everyone can attend service in their pajamas. Regular Sunday School and child care will resume on January 4.

Our Sensory Sensitive Services will be on December 6 and January 3 at 5:00 pm. The December 6th Service will be our Christmas themed Service including decorating Christmas cookies!

N. Smithfield Food Pantry December

For the month of December
Food Pantry hours are:

Saturday 12/20 @ 10:00am
Tuesday 12/23 @ 5:30pm
Saturday 12/27 @ 10:00am
Tuesday 12/30 @ 5:30pm

For December we are asking
for donations of baked
beans, toothpaste and
toothbrushes.





A HUGE THANK YOU!

A Huge THANK YOU to North Smithfield's Finest!

The North Smithfield Police Department organized a Food Drive on behalf of North Smithfield Food Pantry.

They personally delivered and carried in over 4 squad cars full of Food Donations.

We are so grateful for their generosity and their willingness to personally deliver the food.

Thank you so much, Officer Cabral, The Youth Police Explorers and the entire North Smithfield Police Department. We are so grateful and thankful for all you do!

Missions Moment

BY ALISON PEIRCE

As a church, we have so much to be grateful for as we enter the holiday season. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, Missions was able to provide 50 \$40 Brigid's gift cards to the North Smithfield Food Pantry. The gift cards will be included in the Thanksgiving food bags that the pantry distributes and will help the pantry clients with their holiday food shopping needs.

To honor our veterans, we voted to donate \$500 to Operation Stand Down Rhode Island, a nonprofit and primary resource for homeless and at-risk veterans. OSDRI offers a wide range of life-changing services to veterans, including supportive permanent and transitional housing, legal and VA benefit representation, intensive case management, and basic human needs assistance like food and clothing. It is our honor to help Operation Stand Down with all of the good work that they do and to remember the sacrifices that our veterans have made for us.

We are once again partnering with the Broaster House to provide a meal once a month to the Men's Shelter at Harvest Community Church. This outreach will continue monthly until the shelter closes in the spring. Thank you to Bob Meo and Steve Wowk for delivering the meals and to Sandy Gamache for providing the tasty and lovingly prepared desserts along with a taste of home!

Lastly, we have kicked off our annual Adopt-a-Family event. In partnership with the North Smithfield School Department, we have adopted three families and will provide gifts to help make their Christmases extra special. Gift tags will be available during coffee hour. Please remember to bring your WRAPPED GIFT with the TAG TAPED TO THE BOTTOM back to the church on or before DECEMBER 7th. Thank you so much for your support!



A Letter from Friends

Dear Friends at Slatersville Congregational Church,

During this holiday season, we would like to say "Thank You!" to you all for your friendship and generosity. Your support of our outreach programs at Mathewson Street Church, in the heart of downtown Providence, continues to touch the lives of so many.

It is a blessing to have you walking hand and hand with us as we strive to uplift those in need. Your contributions through the ongoing clothing drive, Blessing Bags, books and other things, are greatly appreciated by those who benefit from your generosity. Recently, we were blessed with such beautiful music, when your Handbell Choir participated in our Sunday morning worship service.

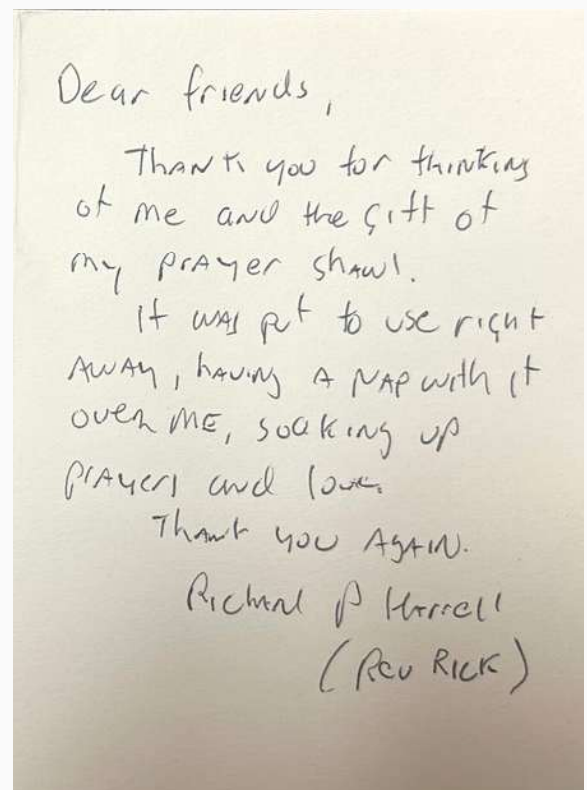
Please continue to lift Mathewson Street Church up in prayer, as we will continue to pray for what God is doing through you all at Slatersville Congregational Church.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas Season!

Your Friends at Mathewson Street Church

A Thank You...

SCC received a kind and thoughtful note from Reverend Rick Harrell (one of our own) which he wrote after receiving a prayer shawl hand-knitted and lovingly prayed over by the ladies of SCC's "Pins and Needles" knitting group and the good folks of SCC.

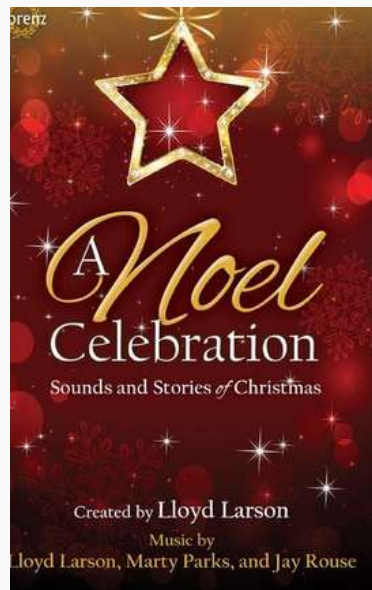


Christmas Happenings



NSHS PRESENTS THE ...
NIGHT OF CAROLS
FEATURING...
INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES
CHAMBER CHOIR
SELECT CHOIR
DECEMBER 14, 2025
6PM & 7:30PM
SLATERSVILLE
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
Email rmcadam@nsps.us
for tickets
All proceeds lower students' Disney Trip costs

Christmas Canata - Sunday December 21st



A Noel Celebration
Sounds and Stories of Christmas
Created by Lloyd Larson
Music by
Lloyd Larson, Marty Parks, and Jay Rouse

Please join our Music Director, Joe Godfrey, and the senior choir on Sunday, December 21, 2025, during the worship service for a special performance of the cantata, A Noel Celebration: Sounds and Stories of Christmas. Joe and the choir has been rehearsing for several months and working hard to bring this beautiful music to you. You will certainly feel the Christmas Spirit as you listen to the music and selected readings. It's a great way to start Christmas week.

The Longest Night - A Service of Rest and Reflection. Hope and Healing - Dec 21 @ 5pm



THE LONGEST Night
A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
OF HEALING & HOPE

December 21st, the winter solstice, is the longest night of the year. With the holidays and the increased amount of darkness, this time of year can be especially difficult for those suffering with grief, loss, or depression in the face of the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, or a struggle with addiction.

If you are struggling in this way we want you to know you aren't alone, others are searching to find light in the midst of the darkness as well. Therefore, we invite you to join us at **5pm** for this opportunity for worship, prayer, reflection, and a time of gathering with coffee and snacks as we pray also for hope and healing, this holiday season as we gather on this solstice night for The Longest Night: A Service of Healing & Hope.

December 21st @ 5pm.

Sanctuary Sounds

Well, our 2025 season is officially over. I call it success. Lessons were learned, friends were made and man, were we entertained!!

Highlights –

- The church was given approximately \$1000 in proceeds from ticket sales and intermission refreshments.
- New folks were introduced to our church. Many want to be included in any upcoming show announcements. The last show, with the New England Ringers, brought in audience members from as far away as Gardner, Foxboro and Warwick. One attendee showed an interest in coming to church to hear our choir's Cantata on the 21st. Friends from the Worcester music scene were thrilled with the vibe and acoustical quality of the sanctuary and we made a community friend, Chris Principe, a musician from Burrillville who wants to assist us in our mission.

And, especially, thank you to all who helped with the performances and all who attended the shows. If you haven't, you're missing out and we hope to see you in 2026.

The performers are Colt and the Coyotes, In Lieu of Flowers, Stefan Couture and The New England Ringers – thank you, thank you for your wonderful performances.
text





Advent Season at SCC

Calendar of Events

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| Sunday, November 16 th | Adopt a Family (for Christmas) Ticket Pick Up |
| Saturday, November 29 th | New England Ringers - Sanctuary Sounds @ 7pm |
| Sunday, November 30 th
(1 st Sunday of Advent) | Hanging of the Greens (during Service)
Coffee & Cocoa with the Wisemen
(During Coffee Hour) |
| Saturday, December 6 th | Scout Troop 438 Holiday Craft Fair
(10am-4pm)
Christmas Sensory Sensitive Service @ 5pm |
| Sunday, December 7 th
(2 nd Sunday of Advent) | Adopt a Family (Drop off Wrapped Gifts)
Children's Pageant Rehearsal (after service) |
| ★ Sunday, December 14 th
(3 rd Sunday of Advent) | Handbell Choir & Children's Christmas Pageant
Mitten Tree
N. Smithfield High School Holiday Concert
@ 6pm & 7:30pm "Night of Carols" |
| Saturday, December 20 th | Drop off Memorial Poinsettias from 12:00-1:00pm |
| Sunday, December 21 st
(4 th Sunday of Advent) | Christmas Cantata - Adult Christmas Pageant
Longest Night Service - 5pm (Blue Christmas) |
| Wednesday, December 24 th | Christmas Eve Service - @5pm (Family Service)
with Luminaries on the Common |
| Wednesday, December 24 th | Potluck Meal between Services |
| Wednesday, December 24 th | Christmas Eve Service @ 11pm
(Candlelight Service) |
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